

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9607

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 2180

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UN, RQ, TD

SUBJECT: COMMITTEE OF 24 CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO RICO

REF: STATE 204749

1. I CALLED ON MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS CUTHBERT JOSEPH AUGUST 23 TO CALL HIS ATTENTION TO THE IMPENDING CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO RICO BY THE COMMITTEE OF 24. I EMPHASIZED TO DR. JOSEPH THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THE U.S. VIEWS THIS INTERFERENCE IN OUR INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND REQUESTED, ONCE AGAIN, THE ACTIVE SUPPORT OF THE GOTT IN EITHER DEFEATING A CUBAN-SPONSORED RESOLUTION OR IN POSTPONING A VOTE ON THE RESOLUTION FOR YET ANOTHER YEAR.

2. DR. JOSEPH ASSURED ME CATEGORICALLY THAT TRINIDAD WOULD NOT SUPPORT ANY CUBAN INITIATIVE ON PUERTO RICO. HE SAID THAT HE HAD SO INFORMED THE CUBAN FOREIGN MINISTER AT THE NAM CONFERENCE IN LIMA LAST YEAR AND THAT HIS GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS IN THIS REGARD WERE FIRM. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT THE GOTT WAS BECOMING LESS TOLERANT OF VISITS TO TRINIDAD BY PRO-INDEPENDENCE
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GROUPS FROM PUERTO RICO TO SOLICIT SUPPORT FOR THEIR

CAUSE. HE SAID THAT THE GOTT HAD REFUSED TO RECEIVE AT ANY LEVEL A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PUERTO RICAN PEACE COUNCIL WHO CAME TO TRINIDAD EARLIER THIS MONTH. PREVIOUS VISITORS FROM PUERTO RICO HAD BEEN GIVEN A HEARING BY A MID-LEVEL OFFICIAL IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

3. DR. JOSEPH SAID THAT THE GOTT WAS FULLY AWARE OF THE REAL SITUATION IN PUERTO RICO AND DID NOT SUBSCRIBE TO THE ARGUMENTS PUT FORWARD BY THE CUBANS. IT WAS THE POLICY OF THE GOTT, HOWEVER, TO ABSTAIN ON VOTES IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24 ON RESOLUTIONS CONCERNING PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE. THIS POLICY HAD BEEN ADOPTED BECAUSE OF THE DEEP COMMITMENT OF THE GOTT TO DECOLONIZATION AS A PRINCIPLE. HE SAID THAT, IN VIEW OF MY REPRESENTATION, HE WOULD PRESENT THE ISSUE TO CABINET FOR A REAPPRAISAL. ON THE QUESTION OF A PROCEDURAL VOTE TO POSTPONE CONSIDERATION OF A HOSTILE RESOLUTION, DR. JOSEPH INDICATED THAT TRINIDAD MIGHT BE ABLE TO GIVE US SOME POSITIVE SUPPORT WITHIN ITS EXISTING POLICY.

4. COMMENT: I WAS MODERATELY ENCOURAGED BY DR. JOSEPH'S STATEMENT THAT TRINIDAD MIGHT SUPPORT A PROCEDURAL MOTION TO POSTPONE A VOTE ON PUERTO RICO. IN 1975 TRINIDAD VOTED AFFIRMATIVELY WITH US AND AGAINST THE MAJORITY TO DELAY CONSIDERATION OF THE ZIONISM AS RACISM RESOLUTION IN THE UNGA AND THEN REVERTED TO AN ABSTENTION ON THE SUBSTANTIVE VOTE. LAST WEEK AT THE NAM SUMMIT TRINIDAD REPORTEDLY ENTERED RESERVATIONS ON THE LANGUAGE OF THE POLITICAL DECLARATION ON PUERTO RICO AND KOREA. THIS MAY ALL BE INDICATIVE OF A NEW WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF THE GOTT TO OCCASIONALLY BUCK THE PREVAILING MODD OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT, AT LEAST ON PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS.

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